

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----041104Z 124371 /12  
P 040827Z MAY 77  
FM USINT BAGHDAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4496

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BAGHDAD 0742

EXDIS, S/S PLEASE CONSULT NEA RE DISTRIBUTION

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, IZ, US  
SUBJECT: U.S. MEDICAL TEAM MEETS SADDAM HUSSEIN

REF: BAGHDAD 712

1. SUMMARY: U.S. MEDICAL TEAM DETERMINED SADDAM HUSSEIN NOT IN NEED OF SURGERY AT THIS TIME. HUSSEIN WAS IMPRESSED BY RESPONSIVENESS OF USG AND HAS GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS STAFF TO FOLLOW UP ON POSSIBILITIES CREATED BY VISIT FOR MOVEMENT IN DIRECTION OF IMPROVED DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. DR. HENRY FEFFER HAS BRIEFED US ON RESULTS OF U.S. MEDICAL TEAM'S EXAMINATION OF SADDAM HUSSEIN AND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH IRAQI OFFICIALS. FEFFER IS PREPARING MEDICAL REPORT ON SADDAM WHICH HE WILL SHARE WITH NEA/ARN UPON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON, APPROX MAY 7. IT WAS UNANIMOUS OPINION OF MEDICAL EXPERTS SUMMONED FROM U.S., U.K., FRANCE, FRG, AND DENMARK THAT HUSSEIN DOES NOT REQUIRE SURGERY AT THIS TIME. THEY BELIEVE THAT HE IS PRESENTLY RECEIVING ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE FOR SLIPPED DISC FROM TEAM OF TWO IRAQI DOCTORS (SADIQ/ALWASH, DIRECTOR OF BAGHDAD MEDICAL CITY AND HUSSEIN'S PERSONAL PHYSICIAN, AND ORTHOPEDIST HADI AL-SABBAGH) AND AN INDIAN OSTEOPATH. THEY

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PRESCRIBED THREE WEEKS IN BED FOLLOWED BY SPECIAL EXERCISES AND HAVE IMPRESSION THAT HUSSEIN IS AGREEABLE TO THIS REGIME. TEAM HAS ADVISED IRAQI DOCTORS, HOWEVER, THAT ANOTHER RECURRENCE OF SERIOUS BACK PROBLEMS WOULD PROBABLY JUSTIFY RECOMMENDATION FOR SURGERY.

3. HUSSEIN'S CHRONIC BACK PROBLEM WORSENER BEGINNING OF

APRIL AND HE SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE PAIN. CONCURRENTLY, ONE LEG BEGAN TO FEEL WEAK AND NUMB. HIS LAST PUBLIC APPEARANCE WAS APRIL 18. ON APPROX APRIL 19, THREE EASTERN BLOCK MEDICAL TEAMS CAME TO BAGHDAD, AND ONE OF THEM APPARENTLY RECOMMENDED AN OPERATION. HUSSEIN PREFERRED ADVICE OF HIS OWN DOCTORS, TOOK TO BED ON APPROX APRIL 20, AND ASKED THAT WESTERN MEDICAL SPECIALISTS BE CALLED IN. PERSONNEL, RANGING FROM AN UNACCOMPANIED DANISH SPECIALIST TO COMPREHENSIVE U.S. TEAM, WERE TAKEN TO HOME OF DR. ALWASH IN KARRADAT MARIAM (PALACE AREA RESTRICTED TO HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND BAATH PARTY/ NOTABLES EARLY MORNING OF APRIL 3 AND FROM THERE NEXT DOOR TO HOME OF SADDAM HUSSEIN.

4. HUSSEIN, WHO WAS IN BED, GAVE HIS MEDICAL HISTORY THROUGH AN INTERPRETER. FOLLOWING AN EXAMINATION, THE FOREIGN SPECIALISTS WITHDREW AND REACHED THEIR UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS (PARA 2 ABOVE). AFTER HEARING THEIR OPINION, HUSSEIN THANKED THEM, INVITED THEM TO RETURN TO IRAQ WITH THEIR FAMILIES AS GUESTS OF THE GOI, AND EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS. U.S. TEAM WAS LATER GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT HUSSEIN'S PHYSICIANS CONSIDERED THEM TO BE THE BEST QUALIFIED GROUP PRESENT, AND FEFFER BELIEVES THAT IF HUSSEIN SUFFERS A RELAPSE, THEY WILL BE ASKED TO RETURN. U.S. TEAM DECLINED PAYMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (WHICH OTHER SPECIALISTS ACCEPTED), SAYING THAT THEY FREELY OFFERED THEIR TIME AT REQUEST OF USG. OBVIOUS FAVORABLE IMPRESSION WAS LATER SYMBOLIZED BY PERSONAL GIFTS FROM SADDAM HUSSEIN.

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5. DURING MEETING WITH HUSSEIN, FEFFER FOUND OPPORTUNITY TO TELL ALWASH HE HAD LETTER FROM PETER BOURNE TO MINISTER OF HEALTH. FEFFER ADDED HIS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT THAT USG OFFICIALS HE HAD MET WHEN PREPARING FOR TRIP DESIRED IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH GOI. ALWASH IMMEDIATELY CONFERRED WITH HUSSEIN AND THEN TOLD FEFFER THAT HUSSEIN HAD ORDERED FOLLOW THROUGH BY TOP LEVEL OF MINISTRY.

6. AT FISH FRYON TIGRAS RIVER ISLAND LATER THAT DAY, FOREIGN SPECIALISTS WERE HOSTED BY HUSSEIN'S BROTHER AND BY SAADOUN SHAKER, MINISTER OF STATE AND HEAD OF IRAQI INTELLIGENCE. SHAKER ALSO ASKED FOR EXAMINATION OF HIS BACK PROBLEM, WHICH WAS DONE THAT EVENING AT SHAKER'S HOUSE IN KARRADAT MARIAM. PHYSICIANS DETERMINED THAT SHAKER ALSO HAS DISC PROBLEM, PROBABLY CAUSED BY OVERWORK, BUT THAT IT IS NOT SERIOUS.

7. SPECIALISTS WERE TAKEN TO BABYLON AND UKAIDER ON MAY 1 AND ALL MEMBERS OF U.S. TEAM EXCEPT DR. FEFFER

PREPARED TO DEPART IRAQ NEXT MORNING. FEFFER WAS TOLD HE HAD APPOINTMENT WITH "ACTING MINISTER OF HEALTH" (RIYAD IBRAHIM HUSSEIN WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY) ON MONDAY MORNING.

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ACTION SS-25

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P 040827Z MAY 77  
FM USINT BAGHDAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4497

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BAGHDAD 0742

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8. ACTING MINISTER OF HEALTH TURNED OUT TO BE HAMID ALWAN AL-JABBURI, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND A MOST UNLIKELY CHOICE TO DISCUSS MEDICAL MATTERS BUT A LOGICAL PERSON TO DISCUSS U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. (WE ASSUME THAT HUSSEIN DESIGNATED ALWAN AS ACTING HEALTH MINISTER SOLELY AS A DEVICE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS. ALWAN IS RECENTLY APPOINTED NUMBER TWO MAN AT FOREIGN MINISTRY AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE A NOVICE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HOWEVER, HE IS A RANKING MEMBER OF BAATH PARTY, CLOSE TO HUSSEIN, AND WAS APPOINTED TO SERVE AS A POLICY LINK BETWEEN THE BAATHI LEADERSHIP AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.)

9. MEETING BETWEEN FEFFER AND ALWAN ON MAY 2 LASTED OVER AN HOUR. FEFFER DELIVERED BOURNE LETTER AND GAVE HIS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION HAD FRESH ATTITUDE TOWARD RELATIONS WITH IRAQ BUT THAT NO IMPROVEMENT POSSIBLE UNLESS THERE WAS DIALOGUE. ALWAN RESPONDED WITH STANDARD ANTI-ZIONIST DIATRITE WHICH FEFFER JUDGED TO BE PRO FORMA. USG SHOULD, SAID ALWAN, LISTEN TO IRAQI VIEWS ON ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE AS WELL AS VIEWS OF ARAB MODERATES. ALWAN THEN CHANGED TONE AND SAID THAT HUSSEIN HAD INSTRUCTED THAT MOVEMENT BE MADE IN "THAT DIRECTION", WHICH FEFFER INTERPRETED AS MOVEMENT TOWARD EXPLORATION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR INCREASED DIALOGUE AND PRACTICAL COOPERATION. ALWAN ADDED THAT THIS MATTER WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOI.

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10. FEFFER PLANNED TO VISIT FACILITIES AT MEDICAL CITY AND IBN SINA HOSPITAL ON MAY 3 PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR SEVERAL DAYS IN EUROPE. (FEFFER WILL ALSO DO REPORT ON THESE FACILITIES.) WILL RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON MAY 7. HE SUGGESTS THAT IN CASE OF FUTURE EMERGENCIES, GOI SHOULD BE ASKED TO HAVE DR. SABBAGH TELEPHONE HIM AT HIS OFFICE (202-676-4382) OR HIS HOME 301-469-6790).

11. COMMENT: SWIFT RESPONSE BY USG, SUPERB PROFESSIONALISM OF U.S. MEDICAL TEAM AND SINCERE PERSONAL DIPLOMACY OF DR. FEFFER HAVE CLEARLY MADE POSITIVE IMPACT ON SADDAM HUSSEIN, OTHER GOI OFFICIALS, AND HUSSEIN'S PHYSICIANS. HUSSEIN'S REPORTED INSTRUCTIONS ARE ENCOURAGING, BUT FOLLOW UP WILL BE DIFFICULT IN VIEW OF THE MANY LAYERED OFFICIAL INERTIA CAUSED BY THE LONG STANDING LOG JAM IN U.S.- IRAQI RELATIONS. NONETHELESS, WE BELIEVE THAT IRAQIS MAY NOW BE MORE INTERESTED IN FINDING A WAY TO MOVE TOWARD AN INFORMAL DIALOGUE. IN THIS CONNECTION, IRAQIS WILL BE MORE WILLING TO RESPOND IF THEY DO NOT FEEL PUSHED. PUBLIC ATTENTION TO EPISODE WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL. GOI IS SUPERSENSITIVE ABOUT HEALTH OF BAKR AND HUSSEIN AND PUBLIC EXPOSURE WOULD PROBABLY KILL ANY CHANCE FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE. USINT WILL SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW UP BY SEPTTEL. WILEY

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